

# THE BURROWER AND THE GATE-CRASHERS

I'm not much interested in the gate-crashing Salahis. But I am interested in two data-points that suggest Republicans are preparing to use the gate-crashing episode like they did the travel office attack under the Clintons.

First, there's this tweet from Karl Rove.

Good question @rip120751. SS getting bad rap. Haven't gotten to bottom of this, likely low-level WH staffer involved—we'll see.

And then there's this post from Michael Isikoff, in which he seems to have reverted to both his form and his beat of the mid to late 90s. In it he credulously repeats the story of a former Bush political appointee who burrowed into the career staff at the White House before Bush left. Said burrower suggests that by stripping her of her responsibilities, White House social secretary Desiree Rogers allowed the gate-crashers to break in.

The White House staff member whose job was to supervise the guest list for state dinners and clear invitees into the events says she was stripped of most of her responsibilities earlier this year, prompting her to resign last June.

The account of Cathy Hargraves, who formerly served as White House "assistant for arrangements," raises new questions about whether changes that she says were made by President Obama's social secretary, Desiree Rogers, may have contributed to the security lapses that permitted Virginia socialites Michele and Tareq Salahi to crash the state dinner for India's prime minister last week and get themselves photographed with the president.

[snip]

Hargraves tells Declassified in an exclusive interview that, while she had originally been hired as a White House political appointee in 2001, she landed a new position on the White House residence staff in 2006 and was specifically detailed to the social office to work on state dinners.

And Michael Isikoff—who surely knows the implications of someone being burrowed in before a President leaves—accepts Hargraves’ claims that she’s not political at all.

In some ways, Hargraves’s account is reminiscent of culture clashes that have arisen in the past between outgoing and incoming White House staff members. Moreover, Hargraves acknowledges that the new Obama staff may have distrusted her because she had originally served as a political appointee in the office of the cabinet secretary under President Bush. But Hargraves, who is a registered nurse by profession, says she has never worked on a political campaign and, as far as she is concerned, her loyalty was to the White House as an institution, not to the Bush administration.

Because registered nurses who get hired as political appointees never had any political agenda, not at all.

Especially when they appear to be reading from Karl Rove’s script.